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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 23, 2021

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**Mayor Fulop Expands COVID-19 Rent Relief Program for Neediest Jersey City Residents**

*Second Phase Expands Eligibility up to \$10,000, Continues to Focus on City’s Most Vulnerable Residents Impacted by COVID-19*

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA)** together announce the next application period for *Jersey City’s COVID-19 Rent Relief Program*, opening Monday, October 4, 2021, through Monday, October 18, 2021. The program provides rental assistance to low-income residents struggling financially due to the pandemic and at risk of homelessness or housing instability.

This next phase will provide eligible low-income Jersey City families with up to \$10,000 in rental assistance. With expanded eligibility, the program will continue to focus on families living at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI).

“We’ve been very clear from the start of the Rent Relief Program that we’d use a phased approach to ensure our neediest residents and landlords receive the financial assistance they deserve, rather than opening it up broadly only to have limited funds monopolized by large developers and out-of-town investors,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We’ve already rolled out several financial assistance programs over the past 18 months to help residents, small business owners, and landlords impacted by COVID-19, and we will continue to expand financial assistance to those who need it most.”

The first phase of the COVID-19 Rent Relief Program reserved eligibility for very low-income households renting in small, owner-occupied buildings to provide financial aid to Jersey City’s most vulnerable residents, both landlords and renters. Historically, this population faces more challenges applying for aid.

The initial funds focused on owner-occupied buildings, where the owner lives and relies on the rental income for sustaining their own home as opposed to a large developer or an absentee landlord that is more organized and would exhaust the limited funds available with their multiple investment properties.

Under this next phase, financially impacted residents that earn up to 80% AMI and are at risk of experiencing housing instability may apply. In accordance with federal guidance, the program will prioritize households:

- with income less than 50% AMI; and
- one or more members who have not been employed for 90 days preceding the date of application.

The rental assistance will be paid directly to the landlord or property manager. Thanks to New Jersey's eviction moratorium, all low-income residents earning less than 80% AMI are protected from eviction due to nonpayment through December 2021.

“We continue our outreach efforts to make sure tenants, small landlords, and community-based partners are aware of this opportunity and know how to apply for the program. Our staff will also continue to assist renters and landlords with completing the online applications. If this round is oversubscribed, we can conduct selection by random lottery,” said **Vivian Brady-Philips, Executive Director of the JCHA.**

Through the COVID-19 Rent Relief Program, the City is dedicating more than \$7 million received from the U.S. Department of the Treasury in Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds to provide up to \$10,000 per qualifying household to cover rent and rental arrears. Earlier this year, the Fulop Administration dedicated \$2.5 million in direct aid to over 1,600 low-income families for utility and rent relief allocated from the Mayor's COVID-19 Community Relief Distribution Fund and CARES Act funding, where 95% of that grant money provided direct aid to residents in the Jersey City Heights and neighborhoods in the south-west section of the City.

The online application period for the latest Jersey City COVID-19 Rent Relief Program will run from Monday, October 4, 2021, through Monday, October 18, 2021. For additional program details and a link to the application, please visit [jcnj.org/HardshipAssistance](https://jcnj.org/HardshipAssistance).

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